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Prevention of orthodontic enamel demineralization: a systematic review with meta-analyses

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Abstract: Aim of this systematic review was to assess the efficacy of preventive interventions against the development of white spot lesions (WSLs) during fixed appliance orthodontic treatment. Nine databases were searched without limitations in September 2018 for randomized trials. Study selection, data extraction and risk of bias assessment were done independently in duplicate. Random-effects meta-analyses of mean differences (MDs) or relative risks (RRs) with their 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were conducted, followed by sensitivity analyses, and the GRADE analysis of the evidence quality. A total of 24 papers (23 trials) were included, assessing preventive measures applied either around orthodontic brackets (21 trials; 1427 patients; mean age 14.4 years) or molar bands (2 trials; 46 patients; age/sex not reported). Active patient reminders were associated with reduced WSL incidence on patient level compared to no reminder (3 trials; 190 patients; RR: 0.4; 95% CI: 0.31-0.64; Number Needed to Treat [NNT]: 3 patients), flat surface sealants were associated with reduced WSL incidence on tooth level than no sealant (5 trials; 2784 teeth; RR: 0.8; 95% CI: 0.63-0.95; NNT: 33 teeth), and fluoride varnish was associated with reduced WSL severity on tooth level (2 trials; 1160 teeth; MD: -0.32 points; 95% CI: -0.44 to -0.21 points). However, the quality of evidence was low according to GRADE, due to risk of bias. Some evidence indicates that active patient reminders and flat surface sealants or fluoride varnish around orthodontic brackets might be associated with reduced WSL burden, but further research is needed. **Keywords:** adverse effects; clinical trials; dental caries; evidence-based medicine; fixed appliances; systematic review.

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TITLE PAGE

Prevention of orthodontic enamel demineralization: a systematic review with meta-analyses

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Short title

Prevention of orthodontic white spot lesions

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Prevention of orthodontic enamel demineralization: a systematic review with meta-analyses

Abstract

Objective: To assess the efficacy of preventive interventions against the development of White Spot Lesions (WSLs) during fixed appliance orthodontic treatment.

Setting and sample population: Systematic review with meta-analysis.

Materials and Methods: Nine databases were searched without limitations in September 2018 for randomized trials. Study selection, data extraction, and risk of bias assessment was done independently in duplicate. Random-effects meta-analyses of Mean Differences (MDs) or Relative Risks (RRs) with their 95% Confidence Intervals (CIs) were conducted, followed by sensitivity analyses, and the GRADE analysis of the evidence quality.

Results: A total of 24 papers (23 trials) were included, assessing preventive measures applied either around orthodontic brackets (21 trials; 1427 patients; mean age 14.4 years) or molar bands (2 trials; 46 patients; age / sex not reported). Active patient reminders were associated with reduced WSL incidence on patient level compared to no reminder (3 trials; 190 patients; RR: 0.4; 95% CI: 0.31 to 0.64; Number Needed to Treat [NNT]: 3 patients), flat surface sealants were associated with reduced WSL incidence on tooth level than no sealant (5 trials; 2784 teeth; RR: 0.8; 95% CI: 0.63 to 0.95; NNT: 33 teeth), and fluoride-varnish was associated with reduced WSL severity on tooth level (2 trials; 1160 teeth; MD: -0.32 points; 95% CI: -0.44 to -0.21 points). However, the quality of evidence was low according to GRADE, due to risk of bias.

Conclusion: Some evidence indicates that active patient reminders and flat surface sealants or fluoride varnish around orthodontic brackets might be associated with reduced WSL burden, but further research is needed.

KEYWORDS

Fixed appliances; adverse effects; clinical trials; evidence-based medicine; dental caries; systematic review

BLINDED MANUSCRIPT

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | Background

Orthodontic treatment with fixed appliances has been established as an integral part of contemporary orthodontics, due to its capacity for precisely planned tooth movements in all three planes. At the same time however, fixed appliances have been associated with adverse effects to the teeth and the surrounding structures including subgingival microbial changes,¹ clinical attachment loss,² root resorption,³ tooth discoloration,⁴ and tooth demineralization.⁵ Among these, tooth demineralizations in the form of white spot lesions (WSLs) are prominent, as they have a negative impact on the esthetic outcome of orthodontic treatment and might even progress into carious lesions.⁶

The reported prevalence of WSLs varies considerably, depending on the measurement method/criteria, inclusion of pre-existing developmental enamel defects, and whether tooth surfaces, teeth or patients are used as reference unit. About every third treated patient (37 per cent) has at least one new post-orthodontic WSL,⁷ whereas 24 per cent of treated teeth developed at least one WSL,⁸ with the teeth most affected being the maxillary and mandibular first molars, maxillary lateral incisors, mandibular lateral incisors, and mandibular canines. Although treatment duration can influence the prevalence and severity of WSLs,⁹ WSLs can also develop within the first 4 weeks of fixed appliance treatment.⁵

Several preventive measures have been suggested to avoid or reduce the development of WSLs during fixed appliance treatment, including fluoride-releasing glass ionomer cements for bonding and banding,⁹ daily use of a fluoride mouthrinses,¹⁰ and the use of lingual orthodontic appliances.¹¹ A previous Cochrane review¹⁰ found that although such preventive measures during orthodontic treatment might be promising in the short term, robust evidence on their effect during the complete span of orthodontic treatment is lacking. However, this review included only 3 randomized clinical trials (RCT) that were published up to 2012 and could not perform any meta-analyses.

1.2 | Aim

Therefore, the aim of this systematic review was to critically assess the evidence derived from randomized clinical trials on humans undergoing orthodontic treatment to answer the question: Which

is the best intervention to prevent tooth demineralization in patients undergoing fixed appliance orthodontic treatment?

2 | MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 | Protocol and registration

The review's protocol was made a priori, registered in PROSPERO (CRD42017079352), and all post hoc changes were appropriately noted. This systematic review was conducted and reported according to Cochrane Handbook¹² and PRISMA statement,¹³ respectively.

2.2 | Eligibility criteria

According to the Participants-Intervention-Comparison-Outcome-Study design (PICOS) schema and due to the scarcity of RCTs on this subject, included were randomized or quasi-randomized prospective controlled human trials that compare any intervention administered at treatment start aimed at preventing the development of WSLs compared to a control/placebo group or to another intervention. Included were both parallel and within-persons randomized trials on human patients of any age, sex, ethnicity, or malocclusion. No limitations concerning language, publication year, or status were applied. Excluded were non-clinical studies, retrospective studies, animal studies, and studies on interventions against WSL administered during or after orthodontic treatment.

2.3 | Information sources and literature search

A total of nine electronic databases were searched systematically by one author (SNP) without any limitations from inception up to September 20th, 2018 (Appendix Table 1). In addition, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Digital Dissertations (searched via UMI ProQuest), metaRegister of Controlled Trials, WHO trials search portal, and Google Scholar were manually searched for additional trials or protocols by the same author. In addition, the reference lists and Google Scholar @ citation lists of eligible full text articles, as well as the reference lists of relevant systematic reviews were screened manually for additional studies.

2.4 | Study selection

Two review authors (TT and SNP) screened the titles and/or abstracts of studies retrieved from the searches and those from additional sources (hand searching, reference/citation lists) to identify articles that potentially meet the inclusion criteria. The full text of these potentially eligible trials, as well as of those abstracts which did not provide sufficient information to allow decision-making regarding inclusion or exclusion, were retrieved and assessed by one review author (TT), while a second one (SNP) independently checked the decisions. Any differences between the two reviewers was discussed and settled by consensus after consulting a third author (MAP).

2.5 | Data collection and data items

Data collection from the identified reports was conducted using pre-defined forms that were finalized and piloted by two authors (TT and SNP) prior to the end of the literature searches. The forms included: (i) study characteristics (design, clinical setting, country), (ii) patient characteristics (age, sex), (iii) oral hygiene protocol, (iv) other sources of fluoride, (v) applied intervention, (vi) analyzed sample, and (vii) outcome details (nature, measurement method, timing). Data were extracted by one author (TT), while a second author (SNP) read again the full texts of the included trials and independently re-extracted the data. Discrepancies between the two reviewers were settled by consensus after consulting a third author (MAP). Piloting of the forms was performed during the protocol stage until over 90 per cent agreement was reached. Data that were not described in the article were calculated from existing data, if possible.

2.6 | Risk of bias in individual trials

The risk of bias within included randomized trials was assessed on outcome level with the Cochrane risk of bias tool, according to the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions 5.1.0.¹² Assessment of the risk of bias within individual trials was likewise performed by one author (TT) and independently checked by a second one (SNP), with the same way to resolve discrepancies consulting a third author (MAP).

2.7 | Outcomes and data synthesis

An effort was made to include all existing trials in the analysis independently of reporting completeness; where data was missing, they were calculated by ourselves or requested from the authors or calculated

from graphs (Supplementary Material). As the outcome of WSL development is bound to be affected by the initial tooth characteristics, used substance, application protocol, patient adherence to given instructions, and oral hygiene, a random-effects model was deemed appropriate to calculate the average distribution of true effects, based on clinical and statistical reasoning.¹⁴ A restricted maximum likelihood random effects model instead of the older DerSimonian-Laird was chosen a priori, based on recent guidance.¹⁵ Mean differences (MDs) for continuous outcomes and relative risks (RRs) for binary outcomes and their corresponding 95 % confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated as effect sizes. Statistically significant RRs were translated into Numbers Needed to Treat (NNTs) to gauge their clinical relevance.

The extent and impact of between-study heterogeneity was assessed by inspecting the forest plots and by calculating the τ^2 (absolute heterogeneity) and the I^2 statistics (relative heterogeneity), respectively. I^2 defines the proportion of total variability in the result explained by heterogeneity, and not chance and we considered arbitrarily I^2 over 75% to represent considerable heterogeneity, while also considering the heterogeneity's direction (localization on the forest plot) and uncertainty intervals around heterogeneity estimates.¹⁶ Ninety-five per cent predictive intervals were calculated for meta-analyses of ≥ 3 trials to incorporate existing heterogeneity and provide a range of possible effects for a future clinical setting, which are crucial for the correct interpretation of random-effects meta-analyses.¹⁷

All analyses were run in Stata version 14.0 (StataCorp LP, College Station, TX) by one author (SNP) and the dataset was openly provided through Zenodo.¹⁸ All P values were two-sided with $\alpha = 5$ %, except for the test of between-studies or between-subgroups heterogeneity where α -value was set as 10 %.¹⁹

2.8 | Additional analyses, risk of bias across studies, and quality of evidence

Possible sources of heterogeneity were a priori planned to be sought through subgroup analyses and random-effects meta-regression in meta-analyses of at least 5 trials, but could ultimately not be performed (Supplementary Material). Likewise, reporting biases were planned to be assessed in meta-analyses of at least 10 trials, but could ultimately not, due to the limited number of meta-analyzed trials.

The overall quality of meta-evidence (i.e. the strength of clinical recommendations) was rated using the Grades of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluation (GRADE) approach, as very low, moderate, or high²⁰ and Summary of Findings tables were constructed using

the improved format proposed by Carrasco-Labra et al.²¹ The minimal clinical important, large, and very large effects were defined as half, one, and two standard deviations of the post-treatment response (for continuous outcomes) and RRs of 1.5, 2.0, and 5.0 (for binary outcomes).^{22,23} The produced forest plots were augmented with contours denoting the magnitude of the observed effects²⁴ to assess heterogeneity, clinical relevance, and imprecision.

2.9 | Sensitivity analyses

Robustness of the results was planned a priori to be checked with sensitivity analyses based on (i) inclusion/exclusion of trials with methodological shortcomings, (ii) improvement of the GRADE classification, and (iii) inclusion/exclusion of within-person randomized trials. In the end, two sensitivity analyses could be conducted, including only trials with low risk of bias for generation of the randomization sequence and for blind outcome assessment.

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | Study selection

The electronic literature search yielded 1321 results, while another two were manually identified from the reference/citation lists of identified papers (Figure 1; Appendix Table 1). After duplicate removal and screening the titles/abstracts of identified reports, the full texts of 252 papers were checked against the eligibility criteria. Ultimately, 24 papers were finally included in the meta-analyses, which pertained to 23 unique trials (21 trials on incisors/canines/premolars with bonded brackets and 2 trials on banded molars). Due to their clear distinction regarding used materials and biology/prevalence of WSLs between bracketed/banded teeth, these were assessed separately.

3.2 | Study characteristics

The study characteristics are presented in Table 1 and Appendix Table 3. The trials were conducted in 8 different countries, while 17 (74%) of them were cluster- (within-persons) randomized studies and 6 (26%) of them parallel randomized. Most of the studies took place in an academic environment (70%). The bracket-group studies included in total 1427 patients (mean: 68, range: 10-298) that were 40.7% male (223 male patients out of the 548 patients in the 12/21 studies reporting sex) and had an average age of 14.4 years (from the 13/21 studies reporting age). The band-group studies included 46 patients

(mean: 23, range: 18-28), but neither of the two studies reported patient sex or gender. In the total 23 studies, a wide range of fluoride sources were reported either in combination with the oral hygiene instructions such as fluoride mouthwash, fluoride toothpaste or as supplementary fluoride sources such as fluoride in the drinking water and fluoride-releasing elastomeric ligatures. The variety of the interventions applied to prevent the formation of WSLs were different types of adhesives, sealants or varnishes and the use of mobile-phone applications and messaging to encourage patient motivation.

3.3 | Risk of bias within studies

The risk of bias assessment of the 23 included studies are presented in summary format in Figure 2. Sixteen (70%) of the trials were found to be in high risk of bias for at least one of the bias domains. The most problematic domains were found to be blinding of outcome assessment (10 trials; 43%), selective outcome reporting (9 trials; 39%), and generation of the random sequence generation (6 trials; 26%). The detailed assessment according to the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool can be found in Appendix Tables 4a and 4b.

3.4 | Results of individual studies and data synthesis

The results of all individual trials being meta-analyzed and the meta-analytical overall estimates can be found in Figure 3, Appendix Figures 1-8, Table 2, and Appendix Table 5. Seven different meta-analyses could be performed from trials on bracketed teeth which examined WSL development (on patient or tooth level), the WSL area changes (on tooth level), and WSL index (on tooth level) (Figure 3, Table 2). A meta-analysis of three parallel randomized trials indicated that active patient reminders were effective in reducing the number of patients with WSLs ($RR=0.44$; 95% $CI=0.31$ to 0.64 ; $P<0.001$; $I^2=0\%$), which translated to a very efficient NNT of 3 patients needed to treat. In addition, meta-analysis of 5 within-persons randomized trials indicated that the use of flat surface sealants around the brackets was effective in reducing WSL development on tooth level ($RR=0.77$; 95% $CI=0.63$ to 0.95 ; $P=0.01$; $I^2=50\%$), which however corresponded to a very large NNT of 33 teeth needed to treat. Finally, a meta-analysis of 2 within-persons randomized trials indicated that the use of a fluoride varnish on the tooth surface was significantly associated with smaller WSL area ($MD=-0.32$ mm²; 95% $CI=-0.44$ to -0.21 mm²; $P<0.001$; $I^2=0\%$).

One meta-analysis could be performed from 2 within-persons randomized trials on banded molars, which examined the WSL development on tooth level, but found no significant protective role from the use of a fluoride varnish under the band's cement (Appendix Table 5).

No adverse effects were reported in any of the studies, but this can also be subject to selective reporting of trial results, as none of the included trials provided a pre-registered protocol.

3.5 | Additional analyses, risk of bias across studies, and quality of evidence

Several subgroup analyses, meta-regressions, and assessments for reporting biases were originally planned in the review's protocol, but could ultimately not be performed due to limited data and inadequate reporting (Supplementary material).

The quality of evidence for the 7 meta-analyses on bracketed teeth ranged from high to very low, as methodological limitations, inconsistency, and imprecision were identified on some cases (Table 3 and Appendix Table 6a). All three meta-analyses with significant WSL-preventive measures (patient reminders, sealants, and fluoride varnishes) were supported by evidence of low quality, due to methodological inadequacies of the included trials that puts them in risk of bias. A GRADE rating of very low confidence was assigned on the findings of the single meta-analysis on banded molars, due to methodological limitations, inconsistency, and imprecision (Appendix Tables 6b and 7).

3.6 | Sensitivity analysis

The sensitivity analyses indicated relative robustness of the results according to randomization and blinding problems, apart from the observed reduced statistical power of the sensitivity analyses, which was expected after omitting trials (Appendix Table 8).

4 | DISCUSSION

4.1 | Summary of evidence

The current systematic review summarizes evidence from randomized trials on preventive measures against WSL development during orthodontic treatment with fixed appliances. Out of the initially identified 1323 hits from the literature search, 23 trials (involving 1473 patients) were ultimately included in the quantitative synthesis (meta-analysis). Another 33 trials were identified as potentially eligible for inclusion, but could not contribute to the meta-analyses, as they investigated diverse combinations of

treatment comparisons and measured different outcomes (Figure 1 and Appendix Table 2). Therefore, the present review focused on the more robust clinical recommendations that could be supported from meta-analyses of at least two meta-analyzed trials, including several new studies published after 2012 that were unavailable to previous reviews.

The pathogenetic mechanism of dental enamel decalcification requires undoubtedly the presence of the structurally organized dental biofilm as a means of converting the food glucose into acidic products. However, the multifactorial nature of the disease assumes that the increased or reduced presence of dental plaque does not translates per se into respective high or low level of WSL incidence.²⁵ Unlike other studies^{26,27} the purpose of our review was to evaluate the more clinically relevant outcome of WSL development which in fact has an impact on the final esthetic outcome and on the integrity of dental structure. In addition, according to our protocol we intended to include also the esthetic assessment of the teeth and WSL by laypersons or patients but without success due to no availability of current data.

Three of the eight performed meta-analyses indicated statistically significant benefits in terms of reduced WSL development or severity (Table 2 and Appendix Table 5). First, active patient reminders via mobile texts or apps were associated in a meta-analysis of 3 parallel randomized trials to reduced WSL prevalence (RR=0.44; 95% CI=0.31 to 0.64; P<0.001; I²=0%) which is translated into a clinically relevant NNT of 3 patients. The introduction of cellphone technology has had a tremendous effect on human lifestyle and the current results indicate that it could possibly be also incorporated in the orthodontist's armamentarium against WSLs. This is in agreement with two previous reviews that also highlighted the possible benefit of active reminders in the fight against WSLs.^{28,29} This might be attributed to the well-documented improvement in plaque accumulation and gingival score of patients in the active reminder group, since these are relevant to the WSLs' pathogenetic mechanism. However, these results should be approached with concern (even though they convey a clinically relevant benefit), since the quality of evidence according to GRADE approach is low (Table 3), due to the fact that two of the three included trials had not employed blind outcome assessment (Appendix Figure 1). This means that future studies are needed to cement our confidence on the protective role of active patient reminders against WSL development.

The use of flat surface sealants emerged likewise as an effective measure in the prevention of WSLs during orthodontic treatment. Dental sealants have been widely used to to create a protective

film on pits and fissures of various teeth^{30,31} and their use has been subsequently proposed also for the protection of flat tooth surfaces during orthodontic treatment. A wide variety of such orthodontic flat surface sealants exists that either include fluoride or not³² and are applied either before or after bracket placement.³³⁻³⁸ Nevertheless, this is to our knowledge the first systematic review to systematically assess the performance of such flat surface sealants during orthodontic treatment in an evidence-based manner. Meta-analysis of 5 included within-persons randomized trials showed that sealants had a significant protective effect on tooth level (RR=0.77; 95% CI=0.63 to 0.95; P=0.01; I²=50%; Table 2). However, this is translated into an NNT of 33 teeth, which (taking on average 20 teeth bonded per patient) indicates that not each patient might necessarily benefit from this. Additionally, the GRADE analysis yielded low quality of evidence for this recommendation, which means that future trials on sealants might change current recommendations.

In the fight against demineralization and dental caries fluoride holds a prominent position, due to the increased resistance of fluoridated hydroxyapatite to acidic environments compared to initially formed hydroxyapatite.²⁵ Therefore, fluoride-fortifying measures have long been established as effective weapons against carious lesions.³⁹⁻⁴¹ In the current review, meta-analysis of 2 within-persons randomized trials indicated that fluoride varnish was associated with reduced WSL area on the tooth surface (MD=-0.32 mm²; 95% CI=-0.44 to -0.21 mm²; P<0.001; I²=0%; Appendix Figure 7), the clinical relevance of which might be questioned. Additionally, we could not find a nominally statistically significant effect of fluoride varnishes on WSL development on patient level (RR=0.49; 95% CI=0.18 to 1.15; P=0.10; I²=85%). However, both meta-analyzed trials were consistent on the protective tendency of fluoride varnish, but provided effect of heterogeneous magnitude that ultimately led to a very imprecise summary estimate. This uncertainty is mirrored in the low to very low quality of evidence according to GRADE and it might well be that future trials enhance our confidence about the efficacy of fluoride varnishes in the prevention of orthodontic WSLs. The same uncertainty exists in the efficacy of fluoride in the treatment of post-orthodontic WSLs, where despite statistical significant results, their clinical relevance remains questionable.⁴² Fluoride-releasing and glass-ionomer bracket adhesives have also been introduced to the market in order to utilize the beneficial effects of fluoride against demineralization. However, our data syntheses could not prove any statistically significant improvement when compared with conventional and resin adhesives (Table 2). Finally, very low quality of data

synthesized from two studies could not show any advantage in the use of fluoride varnish under molar bands (Appendix Table 5).

As far as patient follow-up in the included trials is concerned, most of them assessed WSLs mid-treatment or directly post-debond. A number of studies have examined the progress of WSLs after the removal of fixed orthodontic appliances and have observed a spontaneous improvement of orthodontic WSLs without any additional intervention but regular oral hygiene with a fluoride toothpaste,⁴³⁻⁴⁶ which may continue even one year post-debonding. Thus, it might well be that a miniscule short-term efficacy of a specific measure might diminish in the long term, due to this spontaneous self-improvement. Unfortunately, the current evidence base cannot be used to formulate any recommendations about the long-term performance of WSL-preventive measures and future studies should focus on this.

4.2 | Strengths and limitations

This systematic review has several strengths, which include its a priori registered protocol,⁴⁷ its comprehensive literature search, the sole inclusion of randomized trials,⁴⁸ the use of modern analytic methods,¹⁵ application of the GRADE approach to assess the strength of provided recommendations,²⁰ and the transparent provision of all data.¹⁸ Finally, this review builds up on the recommendation from a previous Cochrane review¹⁰ that based on one trial suggested fluoride varnishes might be effective in preventing orthodontically-induced WSLs. The current review confirmed the recommendation for fluoride varnishes by adding another trial and found that both flat surface sealants and active patient reminders might also be effective in reducing orthodontically-induced WSLs (based on 5 and 3 trials, respectively).

At the same time, some limitations also exist in the present review. First, most meta-analyses were based predominantly on small trials, which might affect their results.⁴⁹ Second, the vast majority of within-persons randomized trials did not take clustering into account and this can lead to biased estimates,⁵⁰⁻⁵¹ while their data were not available⁵² to allow proper re-analysis. Third, many included studies assessed WSL prevalence during treatment and not at debond or post-debond, which might affect the prevalence/severity of observed WSLs,⁹ although WSLs can also develop within the first 4 weeks of fixed appliance treatment.⁵ Finally, the small number of trials that were ultimately included in the meta-analyses and their poor reporting of potential confounders like level of oral hygiene,

compliance, or method used to assess WSLs precluded the conduct of many analyses for subgroups, meta-regressions, and reporting bias that were initially planned (Supplementary material).

5 | CONCLUSIONS

Based on currently available evidence from randomized clinical trials, active patient reminders, flat surface sealants, and fluoride varnishes are associated with reduced development and magnitude of WSLs during orthodontic treatment with fixed appliances. However, the strength of these recommendations is mostly low, due to the inclusion of few small randomized trials in each meta-analysis, while many of the included trials did not assess WSL at debond or later. This means that future randomized trials might radically change existing recommendations concerning the prevention of orthodontically-induced WSLs and might at the same time enable the conduct of network meta-analysis to rank all preventive measures according to their performance.

Future trials should ideally focus on the long-term post-debond performance of preventive measures and employ blinded outcome assessment. Additionally, aspects that need to be improved in future trials of WSL prevention include a priori registration of the trials protocol.⁵⁴ This along with open provision of the trials' dataset will enhance the transparency and repeatability of research.⁵⁵ It is also important that future within-persons randomized trials properly analyze data taking clustering into account in order to provide more precise estimates of efficacy.^{50,51} Finally, patient-related outcomes, such as the esthetic perception of WSLs by patients and orthodontists, might be helpful in order to assess the impact of orthodontically-induced WSL and their prevention on a more pragmatic scale.

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Figure Legends

FIGURE 1 PRISMA flowdiagram for study identification and selection.

FIGURE 2 Risk of bias summary for the included randomized trials.

FIGURE 3 Contour-enhanced forest plot summary of all performed random-effects meta-analyses (REML method). CI, confidence interval; F, fluoride; GRADE, Grades of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluation; pat, patient-level; PrI, predictive interval; RR, relative risk; tth, tooth-level; VS, versus; WSLdev, white spot lesion development.

TABLE 1 Characteristics of included trials on bracketed teeth

Study	Design; Setting; Country*	Patients (M/F); age†	OH	F sources	Intervention
Allabduallah 2017	wpRCT; Uni; SYR	G1/2: 30 (13/17); 17.6	OHI	No topical fluoridation	G1: F-ADH G2: CTR
Banks 1994	wpRCT; Hosp; GBR	G1/2/3: 80 (NR); NR	OHI	No F supplementation	G1: SEAL1 G2: SEAL2 G3: CTR
Banks 1997	wpRCT; Hosp; GBR	G1/2: 50 (NR/NR); NR	OHI	F-MWASH (R)	G1: F-ADH G2: CTR
Benham 2009	wpRCT; Uni; USA	G1/2: 60(30/30); (11.0-16.0)	OHI	-	G1: SEAL G2: CTR
Eppright 2014	pRCT; Uni; USA	G1: 21 (NR/NR); 14.7 G2: 21 (NR/NR); 13.7	OHI + kit	1 x F-MWASH (P)	G1: Active reminder G2: CTR
Fornell 2002	wpRCT; clinic; SWE	G1/2: 40 (17/23); 14.5	-	-Low F drinking water level -Use of F-TPAS twice /day	G1: SEAL G2: CTR
Gaworski 1999	wpRCT; Uni; USA	G1/2: 16 (NR); NR	-	-	G1: ADH 1 (GI) G2: ADH 2 (CR)
Jejurikar 2014	pRCT; Uni; IND	G1: 25 (NR); NR G2: 25 (NR); NR	OHI	-	G1: Active reminder G2: CTR
Kumar Jena 2015	wpRCT; Uni; IND	G1/2: 40 (20/20);15.5	-	-F-TPAS (R) -No other F sources	G1: Varnish (RMGI) G2: CTR
Kumar 2018	pRCT; Uni; IND	G1: 30 (16/14); 16.3 G2: 30 (12/18); 15.3	OHI	-F-TPAS/-MWASH (R) in G1	G1: Active reminder G2: CTR
Marcusson 1997	wpRCT; Uni; SWE	G1/2: 60 (21/39); 13.7	OHI	-F-TPAS (I) -F-level in drinking water 0.2 ppm	G1: ADH 1 (GI) G2: ADH 2 (CR)
Millett 1999	wpRCT; Uni; GBR	G1/2: 40 (17/23); 13.4	OHI	-F-TPAS (R)	G1: ADH 1 (GI) G2: ADH 2 (CR)
Mitchell 1992	wpRCT; Uni; GBR	G1/2: 24 (6/18); 14.4	-	-	G1: F-ADH G2: CTR
Ogaard 1997; 2001	pRCT; Pract; SWE	G1: 101 (NR); NR G2: 97 (NR); NR G3: 100 (NR); NR	-	-T-PAS (1500 ppm F) (P) -No other F sources	G1: F-varnish + CHX- varnish G2: F-varnish + Placebo varnish G3: CTR
O'Reilly 2013	wpRCT; Pract; USA	G1/2: 62 (19/43); 14.6	-	-F-TPAS (R) -F-supplementation for WSLs -F-ADH / F-elastic ties allowed	G1: SEAL G2: CTR
Stecksen-Blicks 2007	pRCT; clinic; SWE	G1: 137 (NR); NR G2: 136 (NR); NR	-	-F in drinking water of 0.2 ppm -F-TPAS (1000-1500 ppm) (R)	G1: F-varnish G2: Placebo varnish
Trimpeneers 1996	wpRCT; Uni; BEL	G1/2: 50 (NR); 12.8	NR	NR	G1: F-ADH (CR) G2: CTR (CR)
Turner 1993	wpRCT; NR; GRB	G1/2: 42 (13/29); 14.4	-	-	G1: F-ADH (CR) G2: CTR (CR)
Vivaldi-Rodrigues 2006	wpRCT; Uni; BRA	G1/2: 10 (5/5); (10.0-14.0)	OHI	NR	G1: F-varnish G2: CTR
Wenderoth 1999	wpRCT; Uni; USA	G1/2: 20 (NR); 13.2	OHI	NR	G1: F-SEAL G2: CTR
Zotti 2016	pRCT; Uni; ITA	G1: 40 (17/23); 14.1 G2: 40 (17/23); 13.6	OHI + kit	NR	G1: OH mobile application G2: CTR

* countries are given with their ISO ALPHA-3 codes

† age is given either as mean (one number) or when mean is unavailable as range (in parenthesis)—all in years

‡ mean age pertains to the initial sample with an additional patient that dropped out

§ Data after drop-outs

£ Reported as medians and not means

ADH, adhesive; BRACK, bracket; CHX, chlorhexidine; CR, composite resin; CTR, control/conventional; G, group; GI, glass ionomer; Hosp, hospital; MWASH, mouthwash; NACP, nano amorphous calcium phosphate; NR, not reported; OH, oral hygiene; Pract, private practice; pRCT, parallel randomized clinical trial; QLF, Quantitative Light-induced Fluorescence; RMGI, resin modified glass ionomer; SE, self-etching; SEAL, sealant; SL, self-ligating; TBRUS, toothbrush; TPAS, toothpaste; Uni, university clinic; wpRCT, within-persons randomized clinical trial; yr, year.

TABLE 2 Results of meta-analyses with at least 2 studies on bracketed teeth

Experimental group	Control group	n	Outcome	Follow-up (mos)	Effect (95% CI)	P	I ² (95% CI)	τ ² (95% CI)	95% PrI
Reminder	No reminder	3	WSL development (Pat-level)	3.0-12.0	RR: 0.44 (0.31 to 0.64)	<0.001	0% (0 to 86%)	0 (0 to 0.66)	0.04 to 4.91
F-releasing adhesive	Conventional adhesive	5	WSL development (Tth-level)	10.5-21.0	RR: 0.86 (0.70 to 1.07)	0.18	4% (0 to 83%)	0 (0 to 0.29)	0.59 to 1.27
F-releasing adhesive	Conventional adhesive	2	WSL area (Tth -level)	10.5-12.0	MD: -0.23 (-0.85 to 0.38)	0.46	0% (0 to 99%)	0 (0 to 43.86)	-
Glass-ionomer adhesive	Resin adhesive	3	WSL development (Tth -level)	13.0-22.0	RR: 0.81 (0.47 to 1.39)	0.44	73% (0 to 99%)	0.16 (0 to 3.97)	0 to >100.0
Any sealant	No sealant	5	WSL development (Tth -level)	12.8-26.7	RR: 0.77 (0.63 to 0.95)	0.01	50% (0 to 97%)	0.02 (0 to 0.68)	0.42 to 1.41
F-varnish	No varnish	2	WSL development (Pat -level)	NR	RR: 0.46 (0.18 to 1.15)	0.10	85% (0 to 100%)	0.38 (0 to 56.63)	-
F-varnish	No varnish	2	WSL area (Tth -level)	6.0	MD: -0.32 (-0.44 to -0.21)	<0.001	0% (0 to 98%)	0 (0 to 1.48)	-

CI, confidence interval; F, fluoride; MD, mean difference; mo, month; NR, not reported; Pat, patient; PrI, prediction interval; RR, relative risk; Tth, tooth; WSL, white spot lesion.

TABLE 3 Summary of findings table according to the GRADE approach on bracketed teeth

Outcome Trials (patients)	Relative effects (95% CI)	Anticipated absolute effects ^a (95% CI)			Quality of the evidence (GRADE) ^c	What happens
		Control	Experimental	Difference		
		No reminder	Active reminder			
WSL development (pat.-level) 3.0-12.0 months 190 pats (3 pRCTs)	RR 0.4 (0.31 to 0.64)	59.6% ^b	26.2% (18.5 to 38.1)	33.4% less patients (21.5 to 41.1 less) NNT of 3	⊕⊕○○ low ^d due to bias	Reminders might probably decrease the number of patients with WSLs
		Control adhesive	F-releasing adhesive			
WSL development (tth.-level) 10.5-21.0 months 2142 tth (5 wpRCTs)	RR 0.9 (0.70 to 1.07)	15.8% ^b	13.6% (11.1 to 16.9)	2.2% less teeth (4.7 less to 1.1 more) NNT -	⊕⊕○○ low ^d due to bias	Probably little to no difference in WSL development on teeth
WSL area (tth.-level) 10.5-12.0 months 135 tth (2 wpRCTs)	-	1.8 mm ²	-	0.2 mm ² smaller area (0.85 mm ² smaller to 0.38 mm ² greater)	⊕⊕⊕⊕ high	Little to no difference in WSL area on teeth
		Resin adhesive	Glass-ionomer adhesive			
WSL development (tth.-level) 13.0-22.0 months 451 tth (3 wpRCTs)	RR 0.8 (0.47 to 1.39)	39.1% ^b	31.7% (18.4 to 54.3)	7.4% less teeth (20.7 less to 15.2 more) NNT -	⊕○○○ very low ^{d,e} due to bias, imprecision	There might be little to no difference in WSL development on teeth
		No sealant	Any sealant			
WSL development (tth.-level) 12.8-26.7 months 2784 tth (5 wpRCTs)	RR 0.8 (0.63 to 0.95)	13.3% ^b	10.2% (8.4 to 12.6)	3.1% less teeth (0.7 to 4.9 less) NNT 33	⊕⊕○○ low ^d due to bias	May have little to no difference in WSL development on teeth
		No varnish	F-varnish			
WSL development (pat.-level) Follow-up not reported 456 pats (2 wpRCTs)	RR 0.5 (0.18 to 1.15)	59.2% ^b	27.2% (10.7 to 68.1)	32.0% less patients (48.5 less to 8.9 more) NNT of -	⊕○○○ very low ^{f,g} due to bias, inconsistency, imprecision	Probably little or no difference in the number of patients with WSL
WSL index (tth.-level) 6.0 months 1160 tth (2 wpRCTs)	-	2.7 points	-	0.3 points less severe (0.21 to 0.44 less)	⊕⊕○○ low ^d due to bias	Varnish may decrease WSL index (severity) on the teeth

Interventions for the prevention of WSLs during orthodontic treatment.

Population & intervention: adolescent or adult patients receiving fixed appliance orthodontic treatment.

Settings: university clinics, private practices, clinics, and hospitals (Belgium, Brazil, Great Britain, India, Italy, Sweden, Syria, USA).

^a The basis for the risk in the control group (e.g., the median control group risk across studies) is provided in footnotes. The risk in the intervention group (and its 95% confidence interval) is based on the assumed risk in the comparison group and the relative effect of the intervention (and its 95% CI).

^b Response in the control group is based on average event rate of included studies in each case.

^c Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies.

^d Downgraded by two points due to serious limitations (high risk of bias).

^e Downgraded by one point for imprecision; wide confidence intervals existing and the summary effect spans from large protective to negligible detrimental role for glass-ionomer adhesives.

^f Downgraded by one point for bias; one of the two studies was in high risk of bias.

^g Downgraded by one point for inconsistency ($I^2 > 75\%$) and one point for imprecision (summary effect spans from very large protective to negligible detrimental role for varnish).

CI, confidence interval; F, fluoride; GRADE, Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation; MD, mean difference; mo, month; NNT, number needed to treat; NR, not reported; Pat, patient; pRCT, parallel randomized clinical trial; RR, relative risk; Tth, tooth; wpRCTs, within-persons randomized clinical trial; WSL, white spot lesion.

FIGURE 1 PRISMA flowdiagram for study identification and selection.

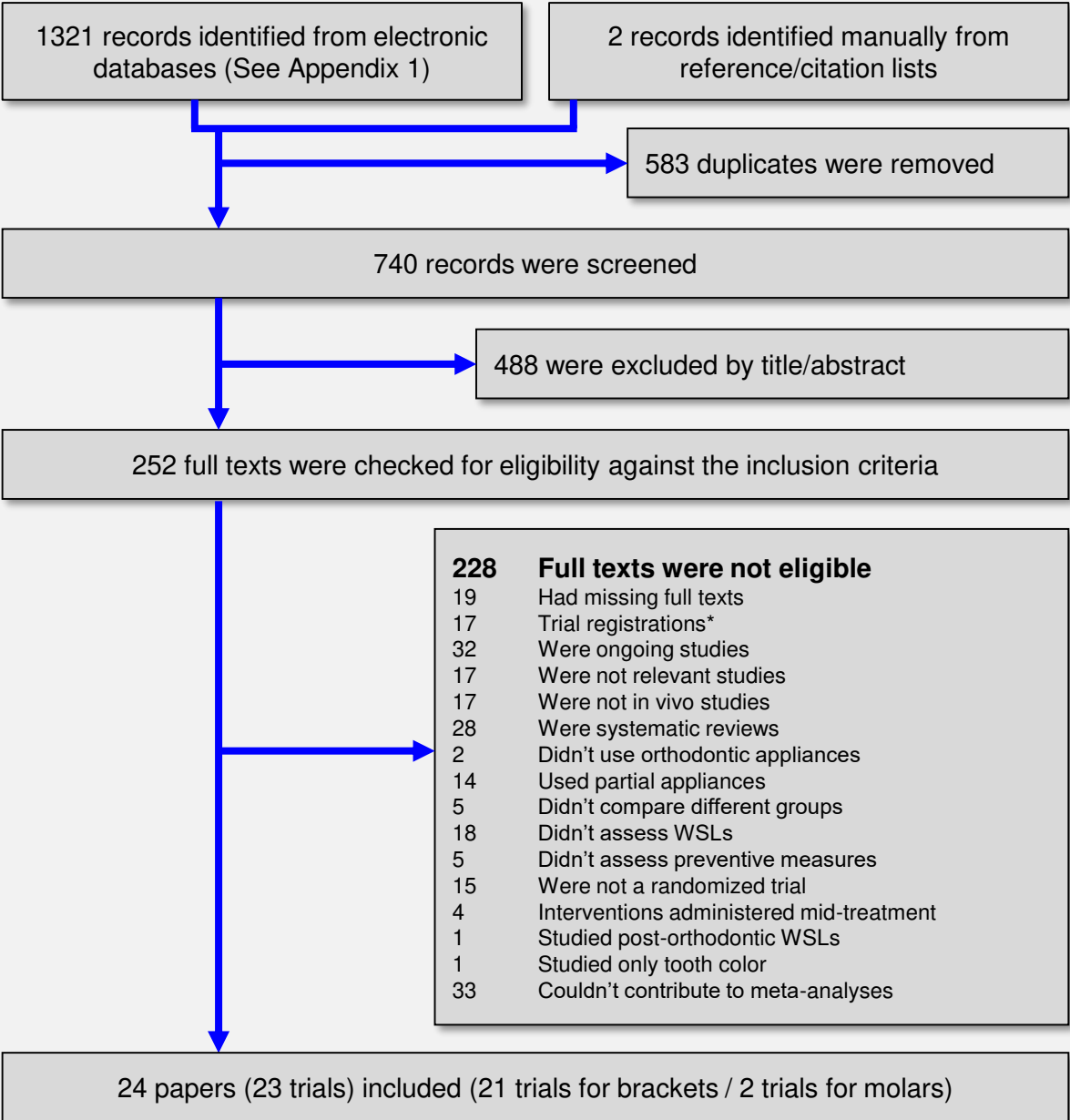


FIGURE 2

Risk of bias summary for the included randomized trials.

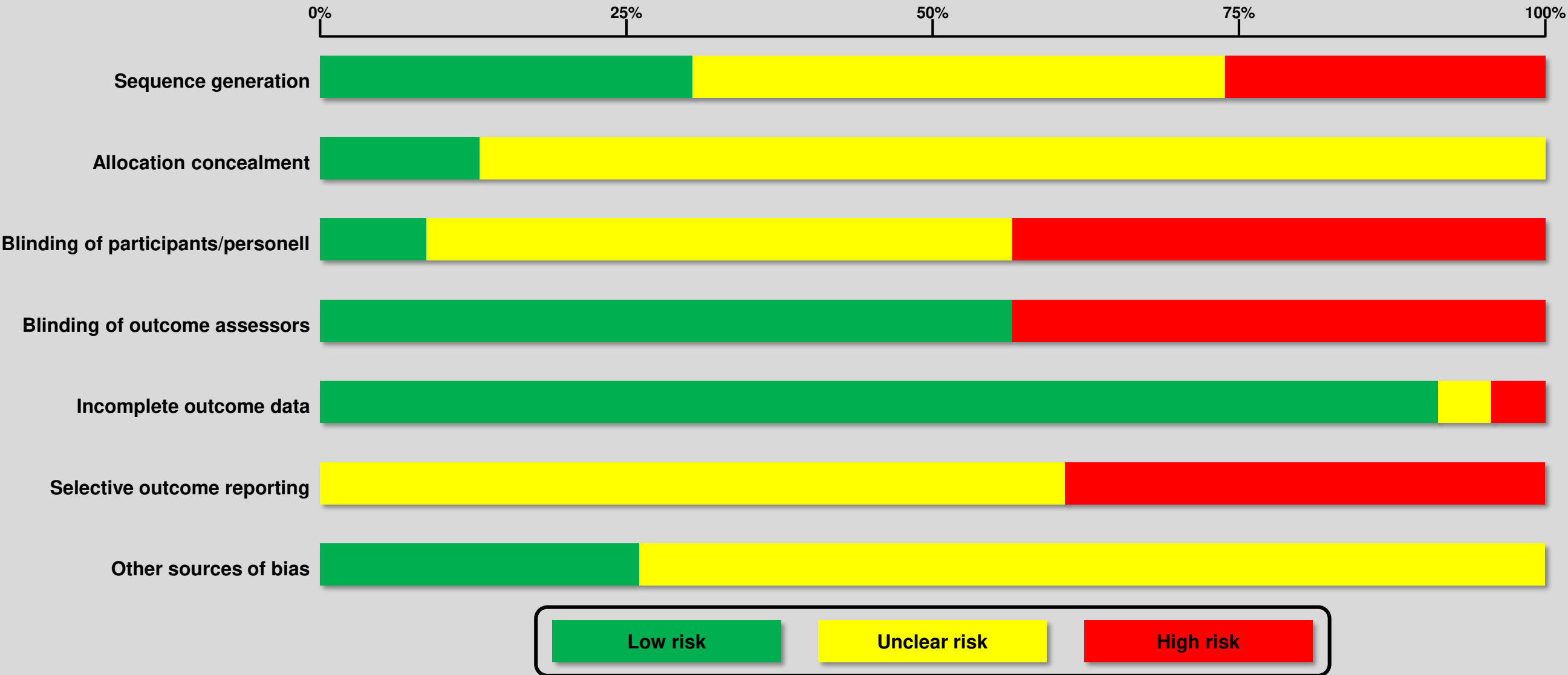
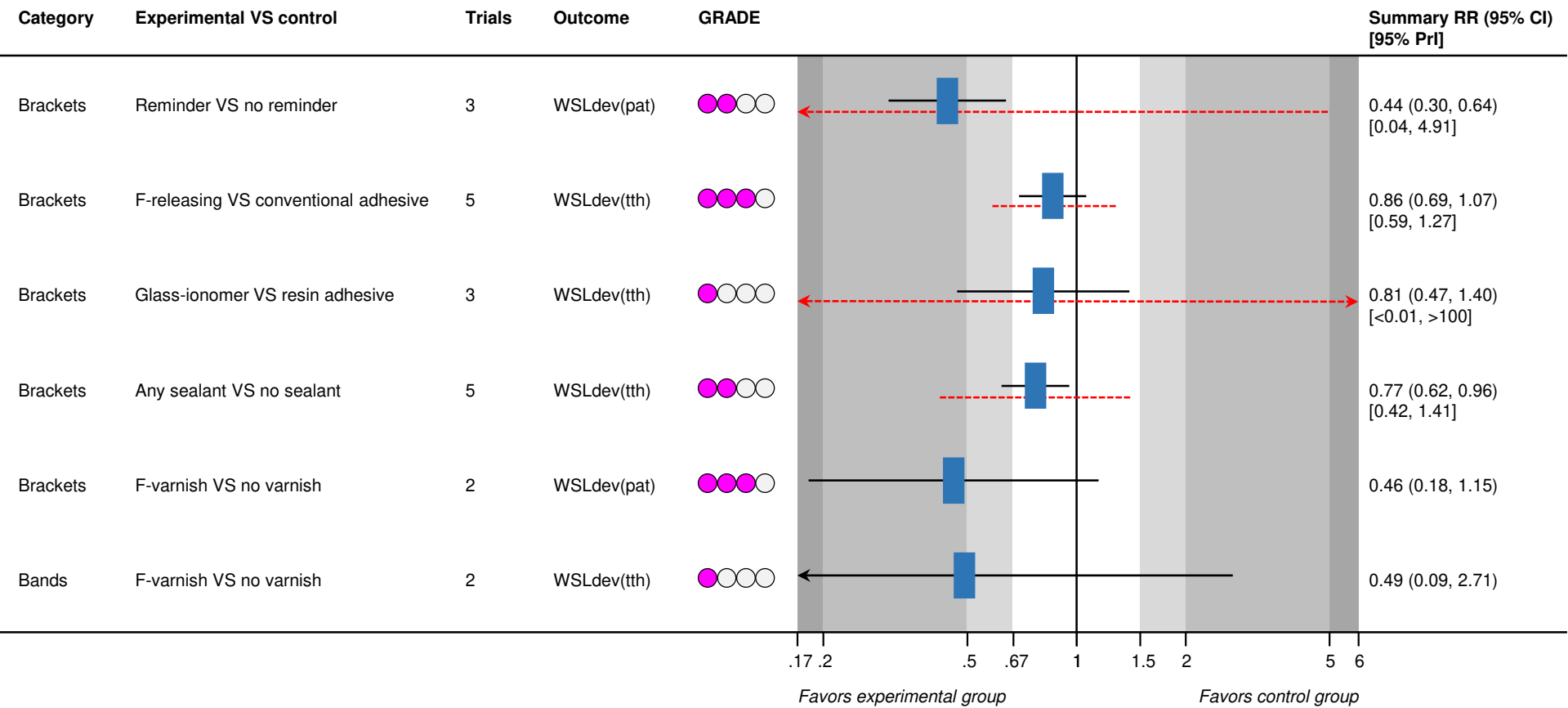


FIGURE 3 Contour-enhanced forest plot summary of all performed random-effects meta-analyses (REML method). CI, confidence interval; F, fluoride; GRADE, Grades of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluation; pat, patient-level; PrI, predictive interval; RR, relative risk; tth, tooth-level; VS, versus; WSLdev, white spot lesion development.



Supplementary Material: Additional information on methods used and deviations from protocol.

Funding

No funding received for the present project.

Conflicts of interests

None declared.

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None.

Additional methods

- Data reported as medians + interquartile ranges were planned to be converted to means + standard deviation according to guidelines from the Cochrane Handbook (Chapter 7.7.3.5). We assumed that the median was a good approximation of the mean. We calculated the standard deviation by dividing the provided interquartile range with 1.35.
- Data provided only in graphs was extracted with WebPlotDigitizer (<https://automeris.io/WebPlotDigitizer/>).

Deviations from protocol

- No conversions from medians + interquartile ranges to means + standard deviations were done, as no such data were included in any meta-analyses ultimately performed.
- Initially, the RoB 2.0 tool was planned in the review protocol to be used for the assessment of included randomized trials. Even though the definite paper including full guidance on the tool's use had not yet been published during protocol writing, it was expected that it would have been published at the time of risk of bias assessment. However, detailed guidance was still not available at assessment time and therefore the original RoB tool was used to assess included randomized trials.

- It had been initially planned that the Paule-Mandel variance estimator would be used for the random-effect model instead of the DerSimonian-Laird one, according to appropriate guidance at the time of protocol writing. However, more recent guidance (from the same group of the first guidance) subsequently suggested a REML approach as a more appropriate and therefore this was ultimately chosen.
- Several factors were planned to be assessed through subgroup analyses/meta-regressions in meta-analyses of at least 5 studies, but could ultimately not be conducted due to limited material/reporting: (i) subsets according to the patient sample characteristics (age, sex, malocclusion type, malocclusion severity, skeletal configuration), (ii) subsets according to the orthodontic appliance used (lingual or buccal/ brackets or bands/ conventional vs self-ligating brackets / ceramic or metal / ligated with elastics or steel ligatures), (iii) subsets according to the duration of the orthodontic treatment, (iv) subsets according to the level of oral hygiene of the patient at the time of seeking orthodontic treatment, (v) subsets according to the patients' compliance with treatment instructions.

Table S1. Literature search performed in each database with its search strategy (last search date: September 20th, 2018)

Nr	Database	Search	Limits	Hits
1	MEDLINE (via Pubmed)	orthodon* AND (deminerali* OR decalcifi* OR "white spot" OR "white-spot") AND (randomized controlled trial[pt] OR controlled clinical trial[pt] OR randomized[tiab] OR placebo[tiab] OR clinical trials as topic[mesh:noexp] OR randomly[tiab] OR trial[ti] NOT (animals[mh] NOT humans [mh]))	-	323
2	Embase	orthodon* AND (deminerali* OR decalcifi* OR 'white spot' OR 'white-spot') AND ('crossover procedure':de OR 'double-blind procedure':de OR 'randomized controlled trial':de OR 'single-blind procedure':de OR random*:de,ab,ti OR factorial*:de,ab,ti OR crossover*:de,ab,ti OR ((cross NEXT/1 over*):de,ab,ti) OR placebo*:de,ab,ti OR ((doubl* NEAR/1 blind*):de,ab,ti) OR ((singl* NEAR/1 blind*):de,ab,ti) OR assign*:de,ab,ti OR allocat*:de,ab,ti OR volunteer*:de,ab,ti) AND [embase]/lim	-	36
3	CDSR	orthodon* AND (deminerali* OR decalcifi* OR "white spot" OR "white-spot")	-	38
4	DARE	Same as CDSR	-	0
5	CENTRAL	Same as CDSR	-	271
6	Web of Knowledge	#1: TS= clinical trial* OR TS=research design OR TS=comparative stud* OR TS=evaluation stud* OR TS=controlled trial* OR TS=follow-up stud* OR TS=prospective stud* OR TS=random* OR TS=placebo* OR TS=(single blind*) OR TS=(double blind*)	DENTISTRY ORAL SURGERY MEDICINE	313
		#2: orthodon* AND (deminerali* OR decalcifi* OR "white spot" OR "white-spot")		
		#1 AND #2		
7	Scopus	#1: (INDEXTERMS ("clinical trials" OR "clinical trials as a topic" OR "randomized controlled trial" OR "Randomized Controlled Trials as Topic" OR "controlled clinical trial" OR "Controlled Clinical Trials" OR "random allocation" OR "Double-Blind Method" OR "Single-Blind Method" OR "Cross-Over Studies" OR "Placebos" OR "multicenter study" OR "double blind procedure" OR "single blind procedure" OR "crossover procedure" OR "clinical trial" OR "controlled study" OR "randomization" OR "placebo")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (("clinical trials" OR "clinical trials as a topic" OR "randomized controlled trial" OR "Randomized Controlled Trials as Topic" OR "controlled clinical trial" OR "Controlled Clinical Trials as Topic" OR "random allocation" OR "randomly allocated" OR "allocated randomly" OR "Double-Blind Method" OR "Single-Blind Method" OR "Cross-Over Studies" OR "Placebos" OR "cross-over trial" OR "single blind" OR "double blind" OR "factorial design" OR "factorial trial"))) OR (TITLE-ABS (clinical trial* OR trial* OR rct* OR random* OR blind*))	Dentistry	285
		#2: orthodon* AND (deminerali* OR decalcifi* OR "white spot" OR "white-spot")		
		#1 AND #2		
8	Virtual Health Library*	orthodon* AND (deminerali* OR decalcifi* OR "white spot" OR "white-spot") AND random*	-	33
9	ClinicalTrials.gov	"orthodontic AND ""white spot"" orthodontic AND ""white-spot"" orthodontic AND ""demineralization"" orthodontic AND ""demineralisation""	-	22
SUM				1321

CDSR, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews; CENTRAL, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials; DARE, Cochrane Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects.

* covering among others the following databases: LILACS, Bibliografia Brasileira de Odontologia, BINACIS, WHO IRIS, IBECS, CUMED, PAHO, LIS -Health Information Locator, MedCarib, BDEFN, Coleciona SUS, DeCS, PAHO-IRIS, Sec. Est. Saúde SP, HISA History of health, and Sec. Munic. Saúde SP.

Table S2. List of studies identified from the literature and their inclusion/exclusion status with reason.

Nr.	Paper	Status
1	Abbate GM, Caria MP, Montanari P, Mannu C, Orru G, Caprioglio A, et al. Periodontal health in teenagers treated with removable aligners and fixed orthodontic appliances. <i>J Orofac Orthop</i> 2015;76(3):240-50.	Excluded by title
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705	Mattick CR, Mitchell L, Chadwick SM, Wright J. Fluoride-releasing elastomeric modules reduce decalcification: a randomized controlled trial. J Orthod. 2001;28(3):217-9.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
706	Miller CC, Burnside G, Higham SM, Flannigan NL. Quantitative Light-induced Fluorescence-Digital as an oral hygiene evaluation tool to assess plaque accumulation and enamel demineralization in orthodontics. Angle Orthodontist. 2016;86(6):991-7.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
707	Millett DT, McCluskey LA, McAuley F, Creanor SL, Newell J, Love J. A comparative clinical trial of a compomer and a resin adhesive for orthodontic bonding. Angle Orthod. 2000;70(3):235-40.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
708	Ogaard B, Alm AA, Larsson E, Adolffson U. A prospective, randomized clinical study on the effects of an amine fluoride/stannous fluoride toothpaste/mouthrinse on plaque, gingivitis and initial caries lesion development in orthodontic patients. Eur J Orthod. 2006;28(1):8-12.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
709	Perrini F, Lombardo L, Arreghini A, Medori S, Siciliani G. Caries prevention during orthodontic treatment: In-vivo assessment of high-fluoride varnish to prevent white spot lesions. Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop. 2016;149(2):238-43.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
710	Polat O, Gokcelik A, Arman A, Arhun N. A comparison of white spot lesion formation between a self-ligating bracket and a conventional preadjusted straight wire bracket. World J Orthod. 2008;9(2):e46-50.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
711	Raghis T, Mahmoud G, Abdullah A, Hamadah O. Enamel resistance to demineralisation around orthodontic brackets after CO2 laser irradiation: a randomised clinical trial. J Orthod. 2018;1-9.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
712	Shungin D, Olsson AI, Persson M. Orthodontic treatment-related white spot lesions: A 14-year prospective quantitative follow-up, including bonding material assessment. Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop 2010;138(2).	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
713	Sonesson M, Twetman S, Bondemark L. Effectiveness of high-fluoride toothpaste on enamel demineralization during orthodontic treatment-a multicenter randomized controlled trial. Eur J Orthod. 2014;36(6):678-82.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
714	van der Kaaij NC, van der Veen MH, van der Kaaij MA, ten Cate JM. A prospective, randomized placebo-controlled clinical trial on the effects of a fluoride rinse on white spot lesion development and bleeding in orthodontic patients. Eur J Oral Sci. 2015;123(3):186-93.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
715	van der Veen MH, Attin R, Schwestka-Polly R, Wiechmann D. Caries outcomes after orthodontic treatment with fixed appliances: do lingual brackets make a difference? Eur J Oral Sci. 2010;118(3):298-303.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
716	Yildirim K, Saglam-Aydinay B. Comparative assessment of treatment efficacy and adverse effects during nonextraction orthodontic treatment of Class I malocclusion patients with direct and indirect bonding: A parallel randomized clinical trial. Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop. 2018;154(1):26-34.e1.	Excluded; not eligible for meta-analysis
717	Adriaens ML, Dermaut LR, Verbeeck RM. The use of 'Fluor Protector', a fluoride varnish, as a caries prevention method under orthodontic molar bands. Eur J Orthod. 1990;12(3):316-9.	Included
718	Alabdullah MM, Nabawia A, Ajaj MA, Saltaji H. Effect of fluoride-releasing resin composite in white spot lesions prevention: a single-centre, split-mouth, randomized controlled trial. Eur J Orthod. 2017;39(6):634-40.	Included
719	Banks PA, Burn A, O'Brien K. A clinical evaluation of the effectiveness of including fluoride into an orthodontic bonding adhesive. Eur J Orthod. 1997;19(4):391-5.	Included
720	Banks PA, Richmond S. Enamel sealants: a clinical evaluation of their value during fixed appliance therapy. Eur J Orthod 1994;16(1):19-25.	Included
721	Benham AW, Campbell PM, Buschang PH. Effectiveness of pit and fissure sealants in reducing white spot lesions during orthodontic treatment. A pilot study. Angle Orthod. 2009;79(2):338-45.	Included
722	Eppright M, Shroff B, Best AM, Barcoma E, Lindauer SJ. Influence of active reminders on oral hygiene compliance in orthodontic patients. Angle Orthod. 2014;84(2):208-13.	Included
723	Fornell AC, Skold-Larsson K, Hallgren A, Bergstrand F, Twetman S. Effect of a hydrophobic tooth coating on gingival health, mutans streptococci, and enamel demineralization in adolescents with fixed orthodontic appliances. Acta Odontol Scand. 2002;60(1):37-41.	Included
724	Gaworski M, Weinstein M, Borislow AJ, Braitman LE. Decalcification and bond failure: a comparison of a glass ionomer and a composite resin bonding system in vivo. Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop 1999;116(5):518-21.	Included
725	Jejurikar H, Nene S, Kalia A, Gupta G, Mirdehghan N. Does text messaging reminder help in the orthodontic compliance of patients to maintain their oral hygiene? Oral Hyg Health. 2014;2:152.	Included
726	Kumar GS, Kashyap A, Raghav S, Bhardwaj R, Singh A, Guram G. Role of Text Message Reminder on Oral Hygiene Maintenance of Orthodontic Patients. J Contemp Dent Pract. 2018;19(1):98-101.	Included
727	Kumar Jena A, Pal Singh S, Kumar Utreja A. Efficacy of resin-modified glass ionomer cement varnish in the prevention of white spot lesions during comprehensive orthodontic treatment: a split-mouth study. J Orthod. 2015;42(3):200-7.	Included
728	Marcusson A, Norevall LI, Persson M. White spot reduction when using glass ionomer cement for bonding in orthodontics: a longitudinal and comparative study. Eur J Orthod 1997;19(3):233-42.	Included
729	Millett DT, Nunn JH, Welbury RR, Gordon PH. Decalcification in relation to brackets bonded with glass ionomer cement or a resin adhesive. Angle Orthod. 1999;69(1):65-70.	Included
730	Mitchell L. An investigation into the effect of a fluoride releasing adhesive on the prevalence of enamel surface changes associated with directly bonded orthodontic attachments. British journal of orthodontics. 1992;19(3).	Included
731	Ogaard B, Larsson E, Glans R, Henriksson T, Birkhed D. Antimicrobial effect of a chlorhexidine-thymol varnish (Cervitec) in orthodontic patients. A prospective, randomized clinical trial. J Orofac Orthop. 1997;58(4):206-13.	Included
732	Ogaard B, Larsson E, Henriksson T, Birkhed D, Bishara SE. Effects of combined application of antimicrobial and fluoride varnishes in orthodontic patients. Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop. 2001;120(1):28-35.	Included
733	O'Reilly MT, De Jesus Vinas J, Hatch JP. Effectiveness of a sealant compared with no sealant in preventing enamel demineralization in patients with fixed orthodontic appliances: a prospective clinical trial. Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop. 2013;143(6):837-44.	Included
734	Stecken-Blicks C, Renfors G, Oscarson ND, Bergstrand F, Twetman S. Caries-preventive effectiveness of a fluoride varnish: a randomized controlled trial in adolescents with fixed orthodontic appliances. Caries Res. 2007;41(6):455-9.	Included
735	Trimpeeneers LM, Dermaut LR. A clinical evaluation of the effectiveness of a fluoride-releasing visible light-activated bonding system to reduce demineralization around orthodontic brackets. Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop. 1996;110(2):218-22.	Included
736	Turner PJ. The clinical evaluation of a fluoride-containing orthodontic bonding material. Br J Orthod. 1993;20(4):307-13.	Included
737	van der Linden RP, Dermaut LR. White spot formation under orthodontic bands cemented with glass ionomer with or without Fluor Protector. Eur J Orthod. 1998;20(3):219-24.	Included
738	Vivaldi-Rodrigues G, Demito CF, Bowman SJ, Ramos AL. The effectiveness of a fluoride varnish in preventing the development of white spot lesions. World J Orthod. 2006;7(2):138-44.	Included
739	Wenderoth CJ, Weinstein M, Borislow AJ. Effectiveness of a fluoride-releasing sealant in reducing decalcification during orthodontic treatment. Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop. 1999;116(6):629-34.	Included
740	Zotti F, Dalessandri D, Salgarello S, Piacino M, Bonetti S, Visconti L, et al. Usefulness of an app in improving oral hygiene compliance in adolescent orthodontic patients. Angle Orthodontist. 2016;86(1):101-7.	Included

* checked for available publications.

Table S3. Characteristics of included trials on banded molars.

Study	Design; Setting; Country*	Patients (M/F); age†	OH	F	Intervention
Adriaens 1990	wpRCT; Uni; BEL	G1/2: 28 (NR/NR); NR	OHI	NR	G1: F-varnish + CEM (GI) G2: CEM (GI)
van der Linden 1998	wpRCT; Uni; BEL	G1/2: 18(NR); NR	OHI	-T-PAS (I)	G1: F-varnish + CEM (GI) G2: CEM (GI)

* countries are given with their ISO ALPHA-3 codes

† age is given either as mean (one number) or when mean is unavailable as rang (in parenthesis)—all in years

CEM, cement; CR, composite resin; G, group; GI, glass ionomer; Hosp, hospital; MWASH, mouthwash; NR, not reported; OHI, oral hygiene instruction; Pract, private practice; pRCT, parallel randomized controlled trial; RMGI, resin modified glass ionomer; TPAS, toothpaste; Uni, university clinic; wpRCT, within-persons randomized controlled trial; yr, year; ZP, zinc phosphate.

Table S4a. Risk of bias of included studies on bracketed teeth.

Study	Sequence generation	Allocation concealment	Blinding of participants/ personnel	Blinding of outcome assessors	Incomplete outcome data	Selective outcome reporting	Other sources of bias	Overall
Allabdullah 2017	Low risk – “The patients were randomly assigned using a computer-generated random number table to one of the two intervention groups...”	Low risk – "...using consecutive, opaque, sealed envelopes that included the randomization sequence. This was generated by an assistant (who was not involved in the study)..."	Low risk – “The blinding of patients, outcome assessor and therapist were achieved throughout the trials. To help with maintaining blinding, both the control and study resin’ tubes were covered with opaque black tape (by an external person), in this way, no connection could be made between the tubes and the types of bonding.”. Also, blinded assessor.	Low risk – see previous cell.	Low risk – low drop-out rate (12%), while within-person design ensures balance across randomization groups.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered, but this has been accounted for. However, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	Unclear
Banks 1994	High risk – quasi-randomization: “In a similar fashion, alternate teeth (306 experimental teeth) were treated by totally sealing the facial surfaces with a non-viscous visible light-activated sealant...”	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	High risk – a categorical white spot lesion severity index (0-3 points) has been used, but data are given as modified data with different categories (0-12 points); also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses.	High risk
Banks 1997	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: “Contralateral quadrants were randomly allocated as experimental and control so that where both arches were treated the allocation was reversed in the opposing arch”.	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	High risk – a categorical white spot lesion severity index (0-3 points) has been used, but data are given as modified data with different categories (0-6 points); also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized teeth is unclear.	High risk
Benham 2009	Low risk – “The sides were allocated prior to the start of the study by a random number generator”.	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.i	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	High risk – only one fourth of the patients are included—the remaining ¾ who had prolonged treatment (and therefore higher white spot risk) were not reported; also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses.	High risk
Epwright 2014	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: “Subjects were randomly assigned to one of two groups, a text message or control group, using a block randomization protocol”	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – “Oral hygiene instruction and study measurements were performed by the same blinded examiner two appointments after baseline (T1) and four appointments after baseline (T2)”	Low risk – one subject from each group did not complete the study but the overall dropout rate was low (5%) and balanced between groups	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Low risk – no other sources.	Unclear
Fornell 2002	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: “After bracket insertion, the polymer coating was applied randomly to the buccal surfaces of all teeth of the first or second quadrant, leaving the teeth in the opposite quadrant as untreated controls”.	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – “In addition, the enamel surfaces of all teeth planned for band and bracket bonding were thoroughly examined by visual inspection before the insertion of the appliances and immediately after removal by one blinded examiner.”	Low risk – one drop-out only reported (immediately after baseline).	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered, and this has not been adequately accounted for.	Unclear
Gaworski 1999	High risk – quasi-randomization: “The odd numbered teeth were bonded with a traditional composite resin system (...). The even-numbered teeth were be bonded with a glass ionomer system (...).”	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized teeth is unclear.	High risk
Jejurikar 2014	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: “... were randomly assigned ...”	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Low risk – no other sources.	High risk
Kumar Jena 2015	Low risk – “The sides (control and experimental) were allocated before the beginning of study by random number generator”.	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – “The evaluator was blinded to the control and experimental teeth during final (T1) evaluation.”	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	High risk – a categorical white spot lesion severity index has been used, but data are given as average across categories in a continuous manner; also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered, and this has not been adequately accounted for.	High risk
Kumar 2018	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge	Low risk – no other sources.	High risk

			providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.			however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.		
Marcusson 1997	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: "For each jaw the two bonding materials were selected according to random procedure and a split-mouth technique".	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – "The observers were unaware of which teeth had been cemented with AquaCem ® and which teeth had been bonded with Unite ®".	Low risk – no drop-outs reported at debonding. 27% drop-out rate at patient level 2 years post-debond, but this does not correspond to the primary scope of this review.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	Unclear
Millett 1999	High risk – quasi-randomization: "This trial took the form of a halfmouth study with patients allocated alternately to have the right or left side of the upper labial segment bonded with the conventional glass ionomer cement, Ketac-Cem".	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – "Examiners were blinded as to which teeth had been bonded with either material".	Low risk – drop-outs reported and justified by reasons not related to demineralizations (bond failure and paired nature of observations).	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	High risk
Mitchell 1992	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: "Allocation of test side (Direct®) was made randomly and brackets on the maxillary incisors and canine in that quadrant placed using Direct® in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions"	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – "However, the examiner was unaware of which teeth were test teeth and which were control teeth."	Unclear – 24 patients were randomized, but only 62 pairs of teeth were finally analyzed: "Sixty-two matched pairs of test and control teeth were contributed by these patients, as not every patient had all six upper anterior teeth bonded"	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	Unclear
Ogaard 1997; 2001	Low risk – Randomization unclear, but probably adequate: "The participants were allocated into 2 groups according to a randomized table"	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	High risk – a categorical white spot lesion severity index has been used, but data are given as average across categories in a continuous manner; also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses.	High risk
O'Reilly 2013	Low risk – "The coordinating center prepared a treatment allocation schedule for each practice with a computer algorithm (www.randomization.com)".	Low risk – "Each practice received a series of note cards, sealed in heavy opaque envelopes, that indicated whether the left canine would be a test or a control tooth"	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – Low drop out rate (5%) and justified by reasons not related to the intervention.	High risk – a categorical white spot lesion severity index has been used, but data are given as average across categories in a continuous manner; also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists. Also, one clear major protocol deviation is reported, in which one practice neglected to perform the final visual examination on its subjects. Therefore, white spot lesion incidence and severity were estimated from photo- graphs taken at debonding for the 6 subjects of this practice.	Low risk – no other sources. Clustered data, but this was probably taken adequately into account.	High risk
Stecksen-Blicks 2007	Low risk – "The patients were assigned to one of the two groups on the basis of odd and even numbers from a dice".	Unclear – no information provided.	Low risk – patients and treatment providers were blinded: "Neither clinicians nor patients knew whether they were treated with fluoride or placebo varnish". Also, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – "The examiners were not involved in the treatment of the patients and blinded for the group assignment".	Low risk – low drop-out rate (6%), with all drop-outs explained and treatment abortion equally distributed across randomization groups.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Low risk – no other sources.	Unclear
Trimpenneers 1996	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: "Maxillary right and mandibular left quadrants were designated at random as the "Orthon group," and the contralateral quadrants as the "Lee group"	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – outcome assessed probably blindly: "All slides were randomly projected in an attempt to simulate a blind test and scored by five different observers to prevent bias".	High risk – bonded teeth that failed during treatment or teeth that were for any other reason rebonded were not included in the analysis, because (according to the authors) the act of replacing the bracket could affect the	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	High risk

					incidence of decalcification. However, white spot lesions could have already formed at debond time.			
Turner 1993	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: "A split mouth technique was employed for the study, using randomly assigned quadrants for experimental and control sides".	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – outcome assessed probably blindly: "Plaque and gingival index scores were taken (always by the same operator) prior to bonding and at 3-, 6-, and 12-month intervals, without knowing which were the experimental and control quadrants". The same was presumably done for white spots.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	High risk – a categorical white spot lesion severity index has been used, but data are given as only as prevalence and not in severity categories; also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists. Also, data for only 28 of the initial 42 randomized patients are given in this report.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	High risk
Vivaldi-Rodrigues 2006	Unclear – unclear information on random sequence generation: "maxillary right and mandibular left) were designated at random as the experimental group and the contralateral quadrants assigned as the control group".	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – "Two calibrated examiners performed a double-blinded examination of the photographs taken before and after 12 months of orthodontic treatment and the tri-monthly applications of fluoride varnish to the experimental quadrants."	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	High risk – a categorical white spot lesion severity index has been used, but data are given as average across categories in a continuous manner; also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	High risk
Wenderoth 1999	High risk – quasi-randomization: "For each patient the odd numbered teeth (...) served as the experimental group with the experimental sealant applied after placement of orthodontic brackets".	Unclear – no information provided.	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly (probably).	Low risk – outcome assessment (probably) done blindly: "All slides were randomly projected in an attempt to simulate a blind test and scored by 7 different observers to prevent bias."	Low risk – very low (4%) drop-outs reported.	High risk – a categorical white spot lesion severity index has been used, but data are given as solely as progression of ratings and not actual teeth within each rating; also, it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses.	High risk
Zotti 2016	Low risk – randomization sequence generation unclear, but probably adequate: "...and a stratified randomization list was produced by an external office, taking into account baseline dental health, gender, age, and socioeconomic status"	Low risk – central allocation deemed adequate (although partially unclear): "The external office was then contacted for patient allocation to the control group (CG) or study group (SG)."	Unclear – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. However, the outcome is objective and has been assessed blindly.	Low risk – "Oral hygiene instruction and study measurements were performed by the same blinded examiner two appointments after baseline (T1) and four appointments after baseline (T2)"	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Low risk – no other sources.	Unclear

Table S4b. Risk of bias of included studies on banded molars.

Study	Sequence generation	Allocation concealment	Blinding of participants/ personnel	Blinding of outcome assessors	Incomplete outcome data	Selective outcome reporting	Other sources of bias	Overall
Adriaens 1990	High risk – no randomization: “Before placement of the orthodontic bands, Fluor Protector® was applied only on the buccal surfaces of the 16 and 46”.	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	High risk
van der Linden 1998	High risk – no randomization: “The split mouth technique was used: teeth 16 and 36 as the test, and 26 and 46 as the control”.	Unclear – no information provided.	High risk – patients and treatment providers were not blinded, but orthodontic treatment providers could have been. Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	High risk – Outcome is objective, but has not been assessed blindly.	Low risk – no drop-outs reported.	Unclear – no obvious selective reporting; it is difficult to judge however whether selective reporting is a problem, as no protocol exists.	Unclear – data are clustered and this has not been accounted for in the analyses. Also, the risk of effect contamination across randomized mouth quadrants is unclear.	High risk

Table S5. Results of meta-analyses with at least 2 studies on banded molars.

Experimental group	Control group	Trials	Outcome	Follow-up (mos)	Effect (95% CI)	P	I ² (95% CI)	τ ² (95% CI)	95% prediction intervals
F-varnish under cement	No varnish	2	WSL development (tooth-level)	48.0	RR: 0.49 (0.09 to 2.72)	0.42	81% (0 to 100%)	1.23 (0 to 189.92)	-

CI, confidence interval; F, fluoride; mo, month; RR, relative risk; WSL, white spot lesion.x

Table S6a. Details of the GRADE Summary of findings assessment on bracketed teeth.

Comparison	Outcome	Risk of Bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Publication bias	Large Effect	Dose Response	Residual Confounding
Reminder vs no reminder	WSL prevalence	Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. Downgraded by two points due to serious limitations (high risk of bias).	Low heterogeneity; no reason to downgrade	Directly relevant; no reason to downgrade	Adequate sample; no reason to downgrade	Safe / not assessable; no reason to downgrade	Large effect, but methodological limitations exist in the included studies.	Not assessable; no reason to upgrade	Residual confounding cannot be excluded; no reason to upgrade.
F-releasing vs conventional adhesive	WSL prevalence	Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. Downgraded by one point due to limitations (high risk of bias).	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Small effect; no reason to upgrade	Same as A	Same as A
F-releasing vs conventional adhesive	WSL area	Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. The risk of bias is unclear.	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as B	Same as A	Same as A
Glass-ionomer versus resin adhesive	WSL prevalence	Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. Downgraded by two points due to serious limitations (high risk of bias).	Moderate heterogeneity; one study for and two against glass-ionomer adhesive; downgrade by one.	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as B	Same as A	Same as A
Any sealant versus no sealant	WSL prevalence	Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. Downgraded by two points due to serious limitations (high risk of bias).	Moderate heterogeneity; no reason to downgrade	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as B	Same as A	Same as A
F-varnish versus no varnish	WSL prevalence	Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. Downgraded by one point due to limitations (high risk of bias).	Large heterogeneity; however, estimators are imprecise and both studies on the same size of the forest plot; no reason to downgrade	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Large effect	Same as A	Same as A
F-varnish versus no varnish	WSL area	Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. Downgraded by two points due to serious limitations (high risk of bias).	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as A	Same as B	Same as A	Same as A

F, fluoride; GRADE, Grades of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluation; WSL, white spot lesion.

Table S6b. Details of the GRADE Summary of findings assessment on banded molars.

Comparison	Outcome	Risk of Bias	Inconsistency	Indirectness	Imprecision	Publication bias	Large Effect	Dose Response	Residual Confounding
F-varnish versus no varnish	WSL prevalence	Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. Downgraded by two points due to serious limitations (high risk of bias).	Large heterogeneity; one study for and one against fluoride varnish; downgrade by one.	Same as A	Sample size most probably inadequate; downgrade by one.	Same as A	Same as B	Same as A	Same as A

Table S7. Summary of findings table according to the GRADE approach on banded molars.

Outcome Trials (patients)	Relative effects (95% CI)	Anticipated absolute effects ^a (95% CI)			Quality of the evidence (GRADE) ^c	What happens
		Control	Experimental	Difference		
		F varnish	No varnish			
WSL development (tth.-level) 48.0 months 176 tth (2 studies)	RR 0.5 (0.09 to 2.72)	25.3% ^b	12.4% (2.3 to 68.8)	12.9% less teeth (23.0 less to 43.5 more) NNT -	⊕○○○ very low ^{c,d,e} due to bias, inconsistency, imprecision	There might be little to no difference in WSL development on teeth

Interventions for the prevention of WSLs during orthodontic treatment.

Population & intervention: adolescent or adult patients receiving fixed appliance orthodontic treatment.

Settings: university clinics (Belgium).

^a The basis for the risk in the control group (e.g., the median control group risk across studies) is provided in footnotes. The risk in the intervention group (and its 95% confidence interval) is based on the assumed risk in the comparison group and the relative effect of the intervention (and its 95% CI).

^b Response in the control group is based on average event rate of included studies in each case.

^c Starts from "high", due to the inclusion of randomized studies. Downgraded by two points due to serious limitations (high risk of bias).

^d Downgraded by one for inconsistency, as one trial favors and the other is against varnish use.

^e Downgraded for imprecision, as the wide 95% CI includes both large beneficial and large detrimental effects.

CI, confidence interval; F, fluoride; GRADE, Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation; MD, mean difference; NNT, number needed to treat; NR, not reported; RR, relative risk; Tth, tooth; WSL, white spot lesion.

Table S8. Sensitivity analyses by excluding trials with high risk of bias for the domains of generation of randomization sequence and blinding of outcome assessor.

		Original analysis				Sensitivity analysis: low/unclear risk of bias for randomization				Sensitivity analysis: low/unclear risk of bias for outcome blinding			
Comparison	Outcome	n	Effect (95% CI)	P		n	Effect (95% CI)	P		n	Effect (95% CI)	P	
Bracketed teeth													
Reminder vs no reminder	WSL development (patient-level)	3	RR: 0.44 (0.31 to 0.64)	<0.001		-	-	-		1	RR: 0.44 (0.20 to 0.94)	0.03	
F-releasing adhesive vs conventional adhesive	WSL development (tooth-level)	5	RR: 0.86 (0.70 to 1.07)	0.18		-	-	-		4	RR: 0.87 (0.64 to 1.17)	0.34	
F-releasing adhesive vs conventional adhesive	WSL area (tooth-level)	2	MD: -0.23 (-0.85 to 0.38)	0.46		-	-	-		-	-	-	
Glass-ionomer adhesive vs resin adhesive	WSL development (tooth-level)	3	RR: 0.81 (0.47 to 1.39)	0.44		1	RR: 0.48 (0.30 to 0.79)	0.004		2	RR: 0.68 (0.30 to 1.55)	0.36	
Any sealant vs no sealant	WSL development (tooth-level)	5	RR: 0.77 (0.63 to 0.95)	0.01		3	RR: 0.60 (0.35 to 1.05)	0.07		2	RR: 0.96 (0.78 to 1.18)	0.70	
F-varnish vs no varnish	WSL development (patient-level)	2	RR: 0.46 (0.18 to 1.15)	0.10		-	-	-		1	RR: 0.27 (0.13 to 0.54)	<0.001	
F-varnish vs no varnish	WSL index (tooth-level)	2	MD: -0.32 (-0.44 to -0.21)	<0.001		-	-	-		-	-	-	
Bonded molars													
F-varnish under cement vs no varnish	WSL development (tooth-level)	2	RR: 0.49 (0.09 to 2.72)	0.42		-	-	-		-	-	-	

CI, confidence interval; F, fluoride; MD, mean difference; NR, not reported; RR, relative risk; WSL, white spot lesion.

Figure S1. Contour enhanced forest plot on the random-effects meta-analysis of patient reminder versus no reminder (parallel randomized trials of bracketed teeth). CI, confidence interval; Evct, events in control group; Evex, events in experimental group; nct, number in control group; nex, number in experimental group; PrI, predictive interval; RR, relative risk; WSL, white spot lesion.

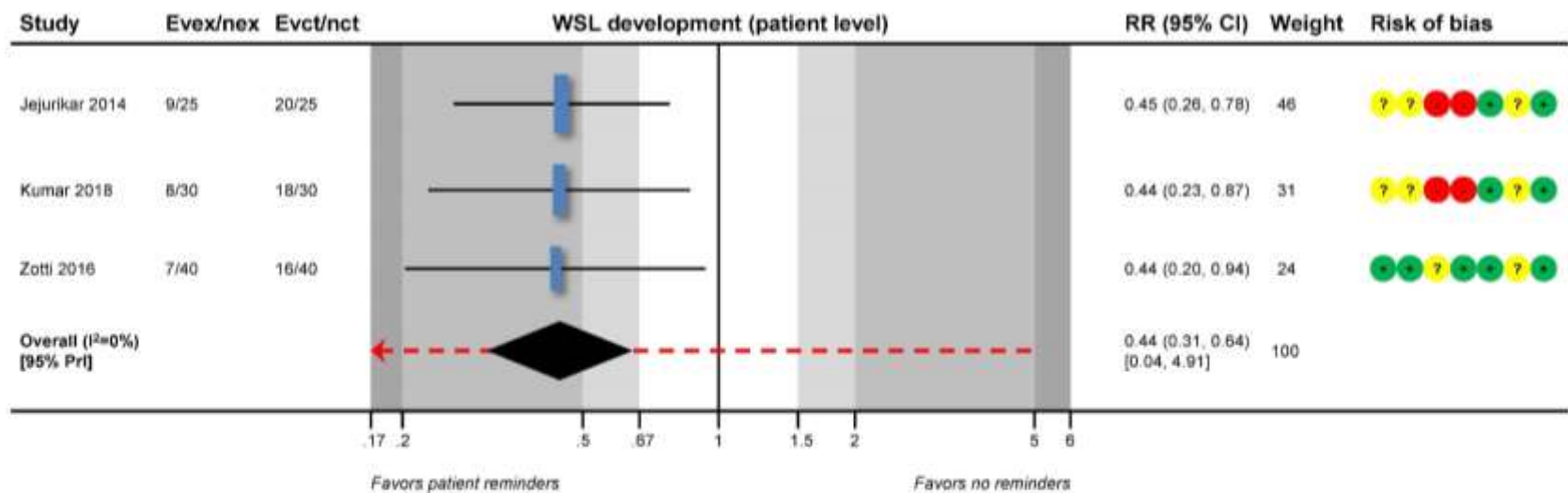


Figure S2. Contour enhanced forest plot on the random-effects meta-analysis of fluoride-releasing adhesive versus conventional adhesive (within-persons randomized trials of bracketed teeth). CI, confidence interval; Evct, events in control group; Evex, events in experimental group; nct, number in control group; nex, number in experimental group; PrI, predictive interval; RR, relative risk; WSL, white spot lesion.

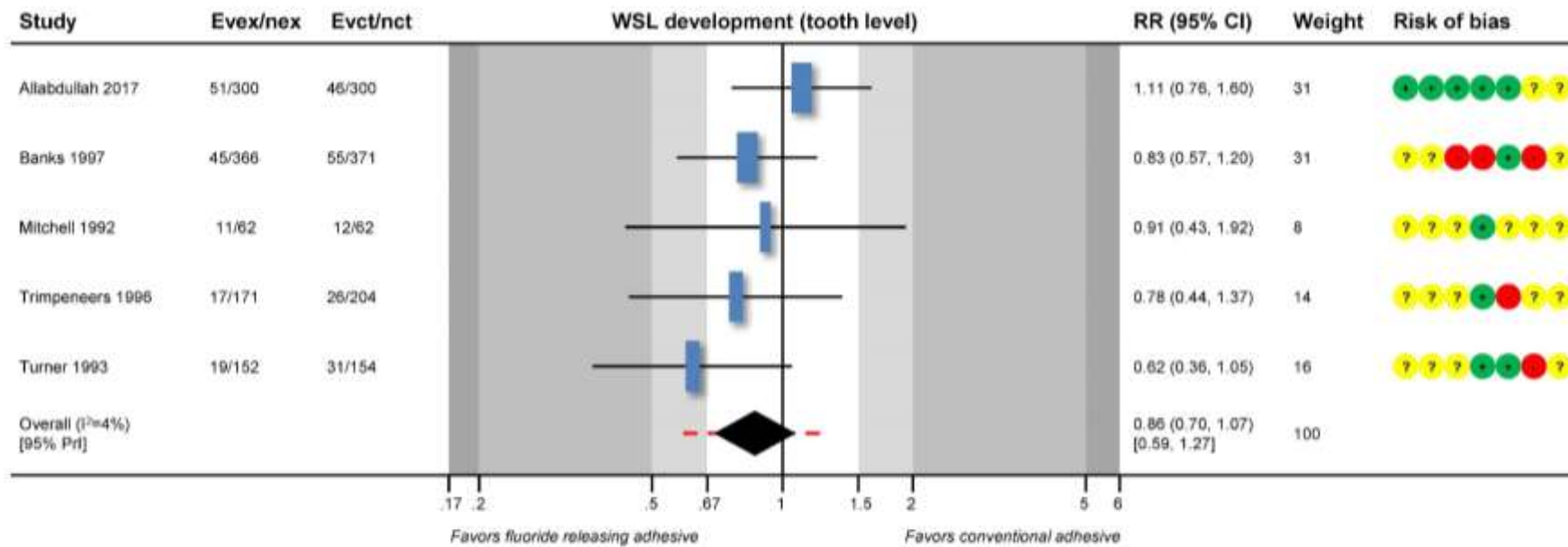


Figure S3. Contour enhanced forest plot on the random-effects meta-analysis of fluoride-releasing adhesive versus conventional adhesive (within-persons randomized trials of bracketed teeth). CI, confidence interval; MD, mean difference; nct, number in control group; nex, number in experimental group; PrI, predictive interval; SD, standard deviation; WSL, white spot lesion.

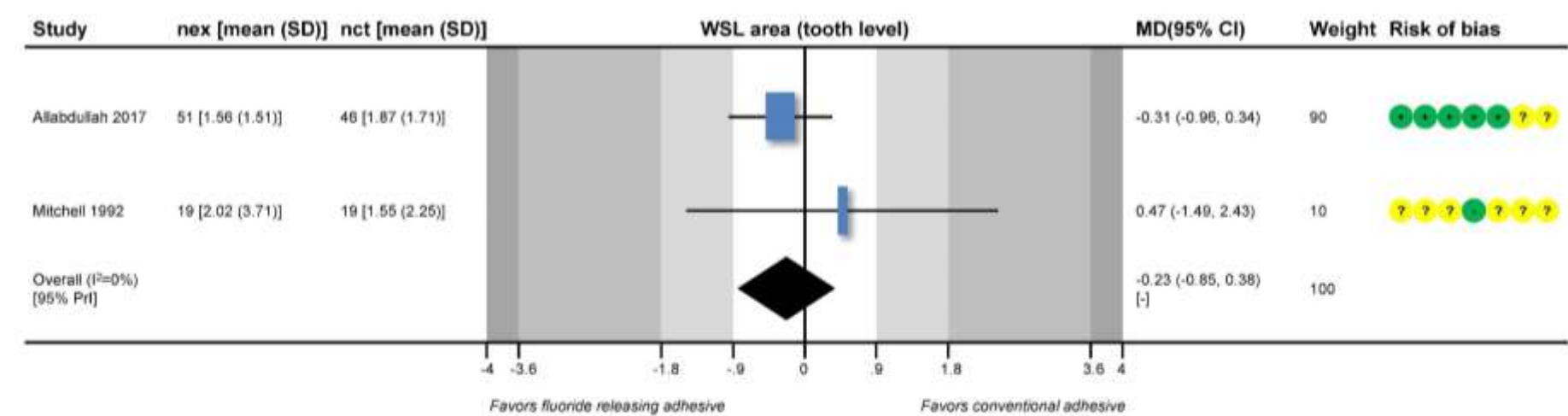


Figure S4. Contour enhanced forest plot on the random-effects meta-analysis of glass-ionomer adhesive versus resin adhesive (within-persons randomized trials of bracketed teeth). CI, confidence interval; Evct, events in control group; Evex, events in experimental group; nct, number in control group; nex, number in experimental group; PrI, predictive interval; RR, relative risk; WSL, white spot lesion.

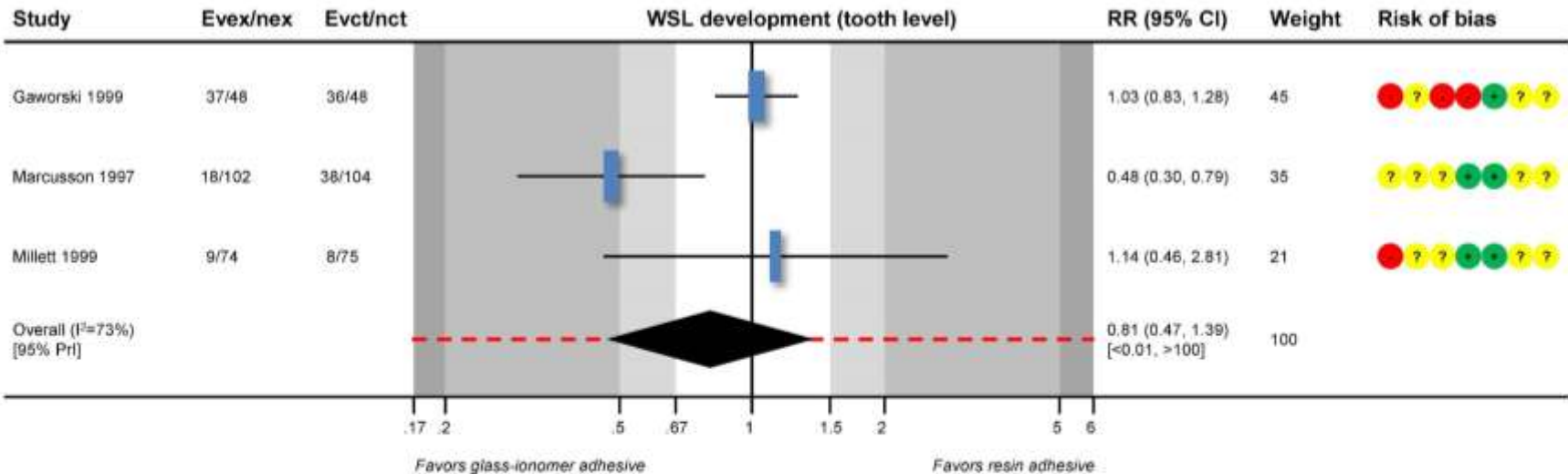


Figure S5. Contour enhanced forest plot on the random-effects meta-analysis of any sealant versus no sealant (within-persons randomized trials of bracketed teeth). CI, confidence interval; Evct, events in control group; Evex, events in experimental group; nct, number in control group; nex, number in experimental group; PrI, predictive interval; RR, relative risk; WSL, white spot lesion.

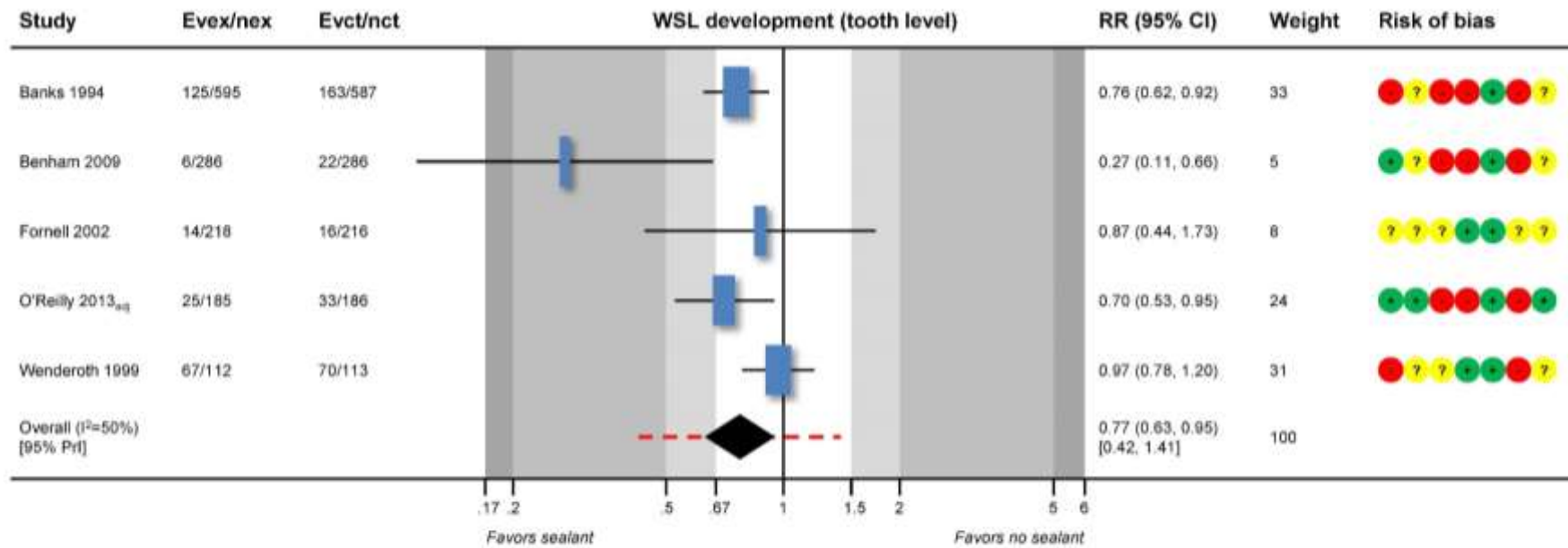


Figure S6. Contour enhanced forest plot on the random-effects meta-analysis of fluoride varnish versus no varnish (within-persons randomized trials of bracketed teeth). CI, confidence interval; Evct, events in control group; Evex, events in experimental group; nct, number in control group; nex, number in experimental group; PrI, predictive interval; RR, relative risk; WSL, white spot lesion.

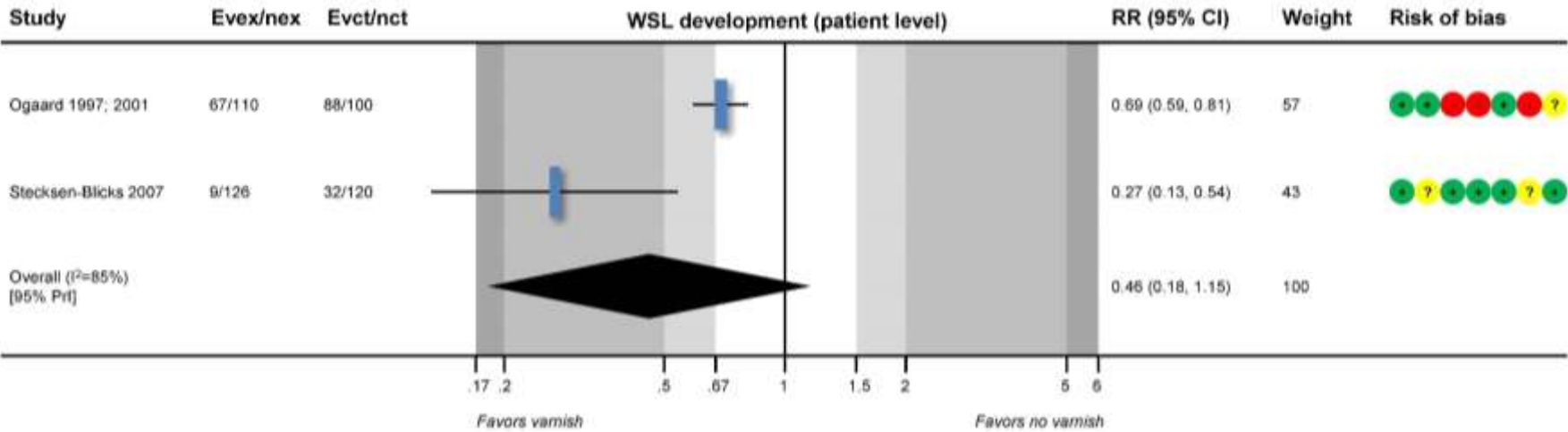


Figure S7. Contour enhanced forest plot on the random-effects meta-analysis of fluoride varnish versus no varnish (within-persons randomized trials of bracketed teeth). CI, confidence interval; Evct, events in control group; Evex, events in experimental group; nct, number in control group; nex, number in experimental group; PrI, predictive interval; RR, relative risk; WSL, white spot lesion.

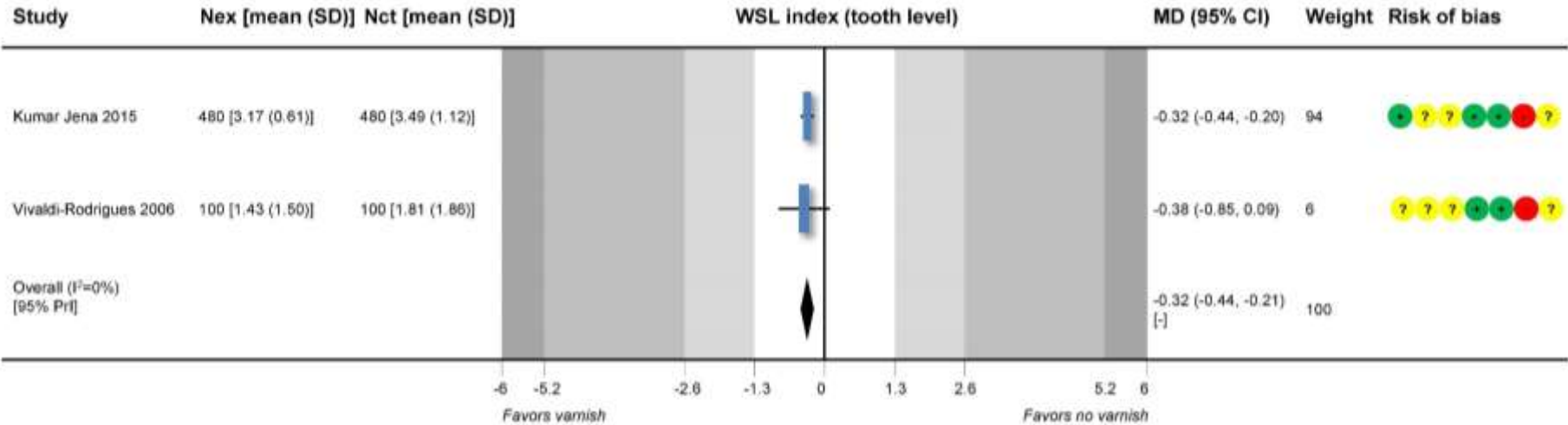


Figure S8. Contour enhanced forest plot on the random-effects meta-analysis of fluoride varnish under cement versus no varnish under cement (within-persons randomized trials of banded molars).

